

# Future of Europe: cities and regions want a reinvented European Union based on solidarity, multi-level governance and proximity with the local and regional level

London School of Economics presents key findings of large-scale survey of EU's local and regional authorities

Results of a pan-European study from the London School of Economics (LSE) collecting the views of local and regional authorities and regional parliaments on the future of Europe and the role they wish to play in a renewed Union were presented on 6 February at the meeting of the Committee of the Regions' Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs ( [CIVEX](#) ). A majority of respondents said that their favoured path for a reformed EU would be through strengthened "multi-level governance" and greater focus on areas relevant to citizens' daily lives rather than treaty changes or new EU ministerial positions. Having more clarity in the distribution of competences between the various levels of governments is, in their views, of greater importance than having more power. A clear majority of cities and regions also insist on cohesion being the number one EU policy priority and that such policy should be available to all EU regions.

As part of the CoR's " [Reflecting on Europe](#) " campaign, the CIVEX commission chaired by **Barbara Duden (DE/PSE)**, Member of Hamburg City Parliament, has commissioned a pan-European study from the LSE. The exercise consisted in a wide consultation of local and regional authorities' representatives, including CoR members, regional parliaments and associations of local and regional authorities at national and European level. Participants were asked about the main issues currently hampering progresses in the European project as well as identifying ways to address those challenges. The aim was to engage qualified stakeholders in the debate on Europe's future and understand what their perceived role in the EU framework is.

Barbara Duden underlined that " *The outcomes of LSE study show that local and regional authorities could play a unique articulatory role between citizens and EU institutions, being as well laboratories of innovation and democracy. The study feeds in the complex exercise that the CoR has been carrying out in order to bring its contribution to the debate on the future of Europe. Such exercise will result in the adoption of an opinion during the Committee's plenary in October 2018, alongside the second State of the Union's address from the view of cities and regions by the CoR President.* "

The survey was conducted with about 2000 stakeholders. The questionnaire

included 17 questions whilst the analysis focussed on three elements, namely governance, policy, representation and communication. Sarah Harrison, Associate professorial Research fellow at the LSE, presented the results of the study and analysis to CIVEX members on 6 February.

According to the main conclusions of the study, a majority of EU's cities and regions:

- consider that the debate on the future of Europe can be an opportunity to reintegrate citizens into the heart of European project, while re-vitalizing the European project;
- are in favour of reforming the current EU institutional set-up through strengthened multi-level governance rather than new treaties or new EU ministerial positions;
- believe that the strength of local and regional authorities lies in a unique proximity to citizens and the habit of involving a variety of actors in decision making to ensure optimal innovation and consensus;
- consider that cohesion should be the number one policy priority for the EU and that having cohesion available in all regions is of great important for EU future
- point out that that vulnerable categories of citizens should be better taken into account in EU decision-making;
- feel that solidarity should be a crucial focus for a reinvented EU.

The results and analysis of the study will feed into the CoR opinion on the future of Europe, to be adopted by the CoR plenary on 8-10 October 2018.

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## ESMA publishes risk assessment work programme for 2018

As market data collected under the AIFMD, MiFID and EMIR mandates and others are becoming available, ESMA is – in close cooperation with the National Competent Authorities – completing the necessary technical infrastructure for their processing, programming routines for their management, and making them available for the relevant analytical evaluation.

ESMA will further enhance its risk monitoring capacities, generating market descriptive statistics as well as sophisticated risk indicators and metrics on the basis of new proprietary data. Most importantly for 2018, ESMA is planning to complement its ongoing market monitoring through our semi-annual Report on Trends, Risks and Vulnerabilities and our quarterly Risk Dashboards by launching an annual report series on EU derivatives markets, based on EMIR data, as well as an annual report series on EU alternative investment funds, drawing on AIFMD data.

In addition, ESMA will continue to pursue in-depth analyses around key topics, including market and fund liquidity, fund leverage, and the impact of innovation especially in the areas of market infrastructures and investment advice.

The 2018 Risk Assessment Work Programme complements ESMA's other activity reporting documents, most importantly the Single Programming Document, the Regulatory Work Programme, the Supervisory Work Programme and the Supervisory Convergence Work Programme.

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## Commission reports on progress under global commitments for sustainable urban development

Significant progress has been achieved under the [three commitments](#) since they were presented at the UN Habitat III conference in October 2016, in order to harness the power of rapid urbanisation. City-to-city cooperation is now flourishing across continents, important steps have been taken towards a single definition of cities at global level and the EU is showing the world the way to sustainable urban development with the ongoing implementation of its [Urban Agenda for the EU](#).

Speaking from the World Urban Forum in Malaysia, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"Much like the fight against climate change, the EU*

*is ready to lead the way for clean, safe and prosperous cities around the globe. Europe and its partners are delivering fast on these three concrete commitments, which contribute to shaping the cities of tomorrow.”*

The [three commitments](#) contribute to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#). They are part of the [New Urban Agenda](#), also presented 15 months ago. Each of these commitments has a specific scope, expected achievements and deliverables. This is what has been achieved since end 2016:

### **Commitment to deliver the New Urban Agenda through the Urban Agenda for the EU**

3 action plans out of 12 have already been drawn up under the [Urban Agenda for the EU](#), on urban poverty, the integration of migrants and air quality. They include policy recommendations, good practices and projects to be replicated across the EU and in the world. All the action plans are expected to be completed by end 2018.

Beyond the thematic action plans, the very methodology of the Urban Agenda for the EU can inspire reforms in the way cities are governed across the globe; it puts on an equal footing cities, businesses, NGOs and representatives from Member States and EU Institutions, for an integrated and balanced approach to sustainable urban development.

### **Commitment to develop a global, harmonised definition of cities**

To facilitate monitoring, benchmarking and eventually policy-making, it is important that the same definition of cities is used globally. The EU has been working on such a definition, which will be presented to the UN in March 2019, in partnership with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation ([FAO](#)), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD](#)) and the [World Bank](#).

So far, the Commission has gathered estimates of the [level of urbanisation of each country](#) in the world and provided free access to this data to facilitate the comparison with national definitions. At the occasion of the World Urban Forum, the Commission, via its [Joint Research Centre](#), is publishing [the global city centres database](#); it contains data for all 10,000 urban centres scattered across the globe. It is the largest and most comprehensive data on cities ever published.

A survey is currently being carried out in 20 countries to gather feedback on the global definition. Pilot projects are ongoing in 12 countries to compare the global definition with the national ones and assess the differences. In the course of 2018, the Commission and its partners will work on a free online tool to help countries test this definition on their territories.

### **Commitment to enhance cooperation between cities in the field of sustainable urban development[\[1\]](#)**

The EU's International Urban Cooperation ([IUC](#)) was launched in 2016 to support this commitment and develop city-to-city cooperation around the

globe.

There are currently 35 pairings under the programme, involving 70 cities (35 EU and 35 non-EU). They include Frankfurt (Germany) and Yokohama (Japan); Bologna (Italy) and Austin (USA) and Almada (Portugal) and Belo Horizonte (Brazil). All partnerships are working on local action plans on joint urban priorities, such as access to water, transport or health, sharing knowledge and best practices to reach their common goals.

A new call was launched at the World Urban Forum to create at least 25 new pairings; cities can apply [online](#) until 9 March.

**More information:**

[World Urban Forum](#)

[Habitat III Conference](#)

[EU Urban Policy](#)

[The Joint Research Centre's Urban Data Platform](#)

[The Joint Research Centre's Territorial Dashboard](#)

[1] The scope of the commitment covers cities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Canada, China, India, Japan, the United States and the European Union.

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## Commissioner Crețu at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Opening Speech by Commissioner **Crețu**, in charge of Regional Policy, on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, at the Opening Plenary of the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (7-13 February 2018)

Mister Minister, Madame Executive Director and distinguished delegates,

It is my privilege to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

First of all I would like to congratulate Ms Dato' Maimunah Mohd Sharif on her appointment as the new UN Habitat Executive Director. Mindful of the role of the UN Habitat as the leading agency on urban issues, we wish her all the best and would like to assure her of the full cooperation of the European Union and its Member States in carrying out her duties and the upcoming reform of the organisation.

The adoption of the New Urban Agenda at the Habitat III conference in Quito was a crucial step forward in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also a cornerstone for other key agendas of 2015, in particular the Paris Agreement and the Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The European Union sees the New Urban Agenda as a collective instrument that will empower both the international community and local governments to turn global urban challenges into great opportunities. As former Secretary General Ban Ki Moon noted, "Our Struggle for Global Sustainability will be won or lost in cities".

The New Urban agenda ambitiously sets the work ahead for thousands of cities on all five continents. The European Union is strongly committed to its implementation, all the more since it reflects well Europe's own vision for sustainable urbanisation. Indeed, we call for an integrated, people-centred and place-based approach that takes into account the diversity of cities and their wider territorial context, while building on urban-rural linkages. The

European Union and its Member States can pride themselves on having been instrumental in shaping the New Urban Agenda.

As we have now moved into implementation, the European Union and its Member States intends to continue playing a leading role by taking forward its commitment.

We adopted the Urban Agenda for the European Union which encompasses many similar approaches and fundamental principles to the global New Urban Agenda.

The Urban Agenda for the European Union is based on a partnership approach involving local governments and other stakeholders. It aims at strengthening the urban dimension in European policies. This means involving and mobilising cities in the design and delivery of these policies.

The European approach seeks to promote a better knowledge base and an effective exchange process, leading to more integrated policy-making, more effective and efficient regulations and needs-oriented funding.

Altogether, this entails a significant change to policy-making, within and for urban areas, based on a renewed commitment to strengthening the capacity of sub-national and local governments in all aspects of governance. I can assure you of our will to support them, in particular regarding revenue generation and access to finance, including data and statistical capacities.

In addition to implementing its Urban Agenda, the European Union and its Member States is also providing substantial external cooperation support to partner countries and cities to take the New Urban Agenda forward. This not only includes the newly launched European External Investment Plan, but also a wide range projects and of initiatives by the EU and its Member States in support of sustainable urbanisation and urban resilience.

Notably, city to city cooperation has proven its worth and value. We will continue to promote this efficient tool. The political ownership of countries and cities in embracing and promoting the New Urban Agenda is key; the European Union and its Member States stands ready to share experiences and provide concrete support.

The European Union and its Member States is also committed to engaging with partners around the globe to promote inclusive and sustainable urban development. Actions should target the specific needs of persons and groups in a marginalised and vulnerable situation, including persons with disabilities, forcibly displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees as well as those living in informal settlements and slums.

The European Union will support partners to improve the delivery of basic services and social support schemes, reinforce capacity to prepare for and respond to emergencies, crises and humanitarian disasters to ensure dignity, including equitable access to food security and decent and affordable housing, and to improve the quality of life of fast-growing urban populations. In line with the New Urban Agenda, the European Union and its Member States will promote sustainable spatial planning, equitable management

of land and real estate markets, sustainable urban mobility and low-emission infrastructure networks and buildings. It will also support smart, safe and resilient cities that make use of opportunities from digitalisation, innovation and new technologies.

To conclude, I wish to emphasise that the New Urban Agenda is the outcome of our joint efforts to come forward with a truly transformative agenda. It contains all elements needed to go beyond business as usual, and to localise the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this respect, the World Urban Forum represents a great opportunity to reiterate our commitment to making the New Urban Agenda a key implementing tool to reach the targets and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Being the first session to focus on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, we expect the World Urban Forum to concretely contribute to the first report on its implementation.

Together we can turn the global challenges of sustainable urbanisation into global assets for all. The New Urban Agenda is a once-in-a-generation opportunity; let us not miss this historical moment.

Thank you very much.